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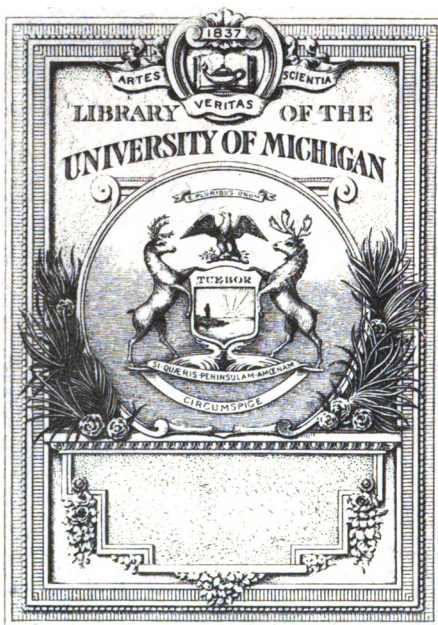
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# *Chatelaine of Vergi*

Chastelaine de Vergi



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The

**L**ancelot  
the  
Knight  
of the  
Cart

a Romance of the 13<sup>th</sup>

Century as translated

by Alice Kemp Welch

with the French Text

Illustrations from a  
contemporary Ivory

Introduction by J Brandirio

London Chatto and Windus

MCXVIII



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page, engraved upon the wood,  
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*La châtelaïne de Vergi*

THE CHATELAINE OF  
VERGI: A ROMANCE OF THE  
XIII<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: TRANS-  
LATED BY ALICE KEMP-  
WELCH: THE FRENCH TEXT  
FROM THE EDITION RAY-  
NAUD: INTRODUCTION BY  
L. BRANDIN, PH.D.



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## INTRODUCTION

**A**





## INTRODUCTION

**A**T the Court of the Dukes of Burgundy, as well as at that of the Count of Flanders, and amongst the *entourage* of Queen Margaret of Navarre, the dainty story of the Chatelaine of Vergi caused many tears to be shed. It made the hearts of many great lords and ladies beat, and excited the pity of many a poet. Touching allusions to the heroine of the story have been made by various illustrious writers. Froissart, for example, guided by Dame Pleasance and Dame Esperance into the garden of King Love, saw her there with Helen, Genievre, Isoud, Hero, Polyxena, Dame Equo, and Medea, and he ranks her love with the sad loves of

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Tristran and Isoud, and of the Lady of Fayel and the Chatelain of Couci.

Coming to us thus, escorted by long centuries of tears and admiration, the Lady of Vergi does not need a lengthy introduction. Her tragic story appears here in its original form, and her sublime love will give pleasure to-day for the self-same reasons which, in the time of Philip le Bel and Edward I., held the noble ladies of Burgundy and Flanders under its spell. All that can be said is that, after the lapse of six centuries, some of the features of the story may appear somewhat antiquated, and that, perchance, it may surprise some fair reader, possessed of only a dim notion of the code of love which prevailed in the glorious age of chivalry, to learn that the mere knowledge that her secret had been betrayed by her lover could, at the end of the thirteenth century, cause the death of a noble lady. Even with this wrinkle

on its brow, and with others which a careful search may disclose, this little romance bears gaily its well-nigh six hundred and fifty years. The absence of the conventional and the traditional, the depth and variety of the psychological analysis, the naïveté of the moral, the unexpectedness of the philosophical ideas—these are the causes of its eternal youth. The colours in which the author has painted the various characters in the story, and the sentiments which he has attributed to them, retain, and will ever retain, their original freshness. One reads and re-reads the pages where he describes the base jealousy of the Duchess ; her utilitarian conception of the love by which she tries to allure the brave Knight ; her influence over her weak husband, unable to sleep as soon as she has persuaded him that one of his vassals has threatened his honour, and equally unable to keep a secret when his wife turns her back.

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upon him in bed ; those, again, where both the cleverness and the artlessness of the Chatelaine stand out ; those where, in her pathetic agony, she pours forth bitter regrets, which soon give place to a sad resignation, to end in a last thought of pardon for him whose treachery has killed her ; those where the character of the Knight is portrayed by his uprightness and by his want of tact, as well as by his hesitation between the loss of his mistress and that of his honour ; and those, finally, where so openly, so innocently, and so intelligently, the little dumb messenger carries, on his four paws, the hopes of the two lovers.

Is this little romance as true to fact as it is realistic ? M. Gaston Raynaud tells us in the following words what *he* feels on this point, when he says : "The poet, writing after the event, has dramatised the story of a great scandal at the Court of Burgundy between 1267 and

1272, a scandal in which Hugo IV., Beatrice of Champagne, and Laura of Lorraine certainly played a part" (*Romania*, xxi. p. 153). This suggestion is interesting, but as the romance was written about the year 1280, according to M. Gaston Paris (see his *Littérature française du moyen âge*, second edition, p. 253), or between 1282 and 1288 in the opinion of M. Raynaud, the author must have been a contemporary of the personages alluded to, and thus it is hardly conceivable that he should have ventured to take such liberties with current events as he must have done if he was recording the scandal alluded to. He must have known, in common with every one else in Burgundy at the time, that Hugo IV. died in 1272 at St. James of Compostella, and yet he tells us that "he went on a crusade beyond the sea, from whence he returned not, for there he became a Templar."

Still less comprehensible is it that he should

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have ventured to place the date of Laura of Lorraine's death at least ten years earlier than the actual date, which must necessarily have been *after* 1281, as in that year, as we learn from Du Chesne's *Histoire de la Maison de Vergy*, she did homage to Otho, Count of Burgundy, on the Tuesday after the Feast of St. Bartholomew, for her dower of the Seignory of St. Autrey. And last of all, it is inconceivable that he should have represented Hugo IV. as having killed Beatrice of Champagne, whose death only occurred in 1295, *i.e.* twenty-three years after Hugo IV. had quitted this world, and thirteen years (or, if we admit the *terminus ad quem* given by M. Raynaud, possibly only seven years) after the story was written. These strong objections against the value of this historical estimate of the story lead us to suppose that the author, who, as we gather from a few peculiarities of the dialect to which

his work belongs, was a Burgundian, was writing for a Burgundian public, and was naturally induced to choose the names of Vergi and Burgundy on account of the personal interest which he himself took in his, and which he thought his countrymen would take in their, own province, as well as on account of the pleasure it would give to all Burgundians to find an interesting story connected with scenes familiar to them.

The poem has come down to us in eight MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and seven of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ten of these are in Paris. They are all in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and bear the following numbers:—375 (written in 1288), 780 (end of the fifteenth century), 837 (end of the thirteenth century), 1555 (fourteenth century), 2136 (fourteenth century), and 2236 (fifteenth century), 4531 (beginning of the



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fourteenth century), 15219 (sixteenth century), 25545 (thirteenth century), and Moreau 1719 (an eighteenth-century copy of a MS. of the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century).

The Municipal Library at Valenciennes possesses one MS., No. 398 (fifteenth century), and there is one in the Royal Library at Berlin, Hamilton 257 (end of the thirteenth century), one in the Library at Hamburg (middle of the fifteenth century), and one in the Bodleian Library, 445 (second half of the fifteenth century). It is difficult to classify these MSS. strictly, and hitherto it has only been possible satisfactorily to edit the *Chatelaine of Vergi* from the earliest ones.

The first edition is the result of the labours of Méon in 1808, and appeared in vol. iv. of *Fabliaux et Contes*, pp. 296 to 326. It only takes into account the MSS. 375, 837, and 25545.

The second edition appeared in 1892, in vol. xxi, of the *Romania*. M. Gaston Raynaud, to establish his text, made use of the thirteenth and fourteenth century MSS. only. None of these MSS. are derived immediately from the original text. They all contain, indeed, one error which seems to throw a new light upon their common origin. They all have, in verse 393, "le chevalier," instead of "le chienet." This shows that they must be referred back to some earlier MS., where the abbreviation *ch'* had been already wrongly interpreted as signifying what it usually does, *Chevalier*, whereas in this instance it ought to have received an entirely different rendering, namely *Chienet*.

In addition to an ably edited text, M. Raynaud's edition contains an introduction which gives the most complete information about the early MSS., the transcripts, and the popularity of this romance, and one cannot do better than

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refer the reader to it. Above all, he will find portrayed there, by a master-hand, the fate that befell this story from the end of the thirteenth century onwards. He will see how the Lady of Vergi became, as early as the fourteenth century, the Lady of Vergier, and how she was confounded, at the end of the eighteenth century, with the heroine of a romance which enjoyed the greatest success in the Middle Ages—the *Chatelain of Couci*. The success of the *Chatelaine of Vergi* was considerable. It was copied and translated in France, and in other places abroad. The poem was so much in vogue, that it comes down to us, as mentioned already, in as many as fifteen MSS.

In the fourteenth century a Netherlandish edition, in verse, appeared, printed straight from the original French, says M. Raynaud, and this became the source of a popular version printed for the first time at Antwerp about 1550,

and reprinted at Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. In France some unknown writer revived it, about 1540, in a new form, under the title of *Livre d'amours du chevalier et de la dame chastellaine du Vergier comprenant l'estat de leur amour et comment elle fut continuée jusques à la mort.*

Marguerite of Navarre hardly did more than translate it into prose in the seventieth tale, seventh day of the *Heptameron*. Bandello reproduced, in part iv. of his *Novelle*, and almost without change, Marguerite of Navarre's version. François de Belleforest retranslated into French Bandello's story, and it forms No. 84 of his *Histoires tragiques de Bandello*. In the eighteenth century it became a work of pure fiction, from the pen of M. de Vignacourt, in *La Comtesse de Vergi, nouvelle historique, galante et tragique*, and from that of an anonymous writer who published in 1766 *La Comtesse de Vergi et Raoul de*

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*Couci, époux et amans fidèles, histoires véritable,  
galante et tragique.*

Paper and parchment did not suffice to tell the story of the Chatelaine of Vergi; ivory also was used to perpetuate its memory. An ivory casket of the fourteenth century, now in Case F in the Mediæval Room in the British Museum, represents the various episodes of the story with great accuracy. It is from this casket that the illustrations accompanying this translation have been taken. The finish of detail, and the naïveté and variety of the figures, are remarkable, as is also the harmonious grouping of the individuals represented. This casket differs very little from another one in the Louvre (noticed in M. Émile Molinier's *Catalogue du Musée du Louvre*), which also has great artistic value, and likewise dates from the fourteenth century. The only difference between the two is to be found in the addition of a

scène which is only represented on the Louvre casket, the eighteenth compartment of which shows the Duke, after beheading the Duchess with his sword, kneeling before an ecclesiastic, by whom he is being blessed and presented with a cross.

There are also various fragments of caskets in existence which represent the same subject (see *Le Catalogue de l'Exposition retrospective de l'art français au Trocadéro*, in 1889, p. 18, Nos. 122 and 123), and which prove the favour in which the poem was held.

Our personal researches in the "Salle des estampes" of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and in several other places, have not put us on the track of any other documents inspired by the *Chatelaine of Vergi*. There must, however, be others. On tapestries particularly this legend must often have been represented, and we hope that some reader, fond of archæological research,

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will be induced to follow up the search in other directions, and not be discouraged by the failure of our own efforts.

In conclusion, our sincerest thanks are due to all those who have been so good as to give us their aid : to the late M. Gaston Paris, to Messrs. Picot and Paul Meyer, and above all to M. Gaston Raynaud, who, with his habitual courtesy, has given permission for the reproduction of the text of the poem which he published in the *Romania*, and in which reproduction only a few modifications of his text have been introduced, the only one of any importance being the one in verse 393 alluded to above.

L. BRANDIN.

## TRANSLATION

**B**









## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

SOME there are who make pretence to be loyal, and so truly to keep secret that which is confided to them, that in the end trust is put in them. But when it happens that any one has been so indiscreet as to let them know of his love and of his doings, forthwith they noise it abroad, and make merry over it. And thus it comes to pass that he who has made known the secret, loses all delight, since the greater the love between true lovers, the more grieved are they when either thinks that that which should have been kept secret, has been made known by the other. And oftentimes does such mischief come of it, that their love must needs end in

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great sorrow and shame, as it chanced in Burgundy to a valiant and brave Knight, and to the Lady of Vergi, whom the Knight loved so well, that the Lady gave him her love on this condition, that whensoever he should discover unto another their love, on that day would he lose her love, and the gift which she had made to him of herself. And to enjoy their love, they devised for the Knight to come alway into an orchard when she should appoint, and in nowise to stir from one corner of it until he had seen a little dog cross the orchard. Then without tarrying might he come to her chamber, and know well that he would find his lady alone.

Thus, unknown to any, did their sweet and secret love longwhile dure. The knight was handsome and brave, and by reason of his valour he was in favour with the Duke who ruled Burgundy. And ofttimes did he go to the Court, and so oft went he, that the Duchess

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 21

conceived a love for him, and made such show of her love, that had not his heart been elsewhere, readily would he indeed have perceived from her look that she loved him. But no response did the Knight make to all her tender glances, nor did he perceive that she loved him, and because of this she was sore vexed, and, on a day, thus spake she to him: "Sire, you are handsome and brave, so say all, God be thanked, and thus you have rightly deserved to have for friend one of so high rank that honour and advantage may come to you of it. How well would such a friend become you!"

"My lady," said he, "never have I yet given thought to this."

"By my faith," said she, "meseemeth a long waiting may be harmful to you. So I counsel you that you may bear yourself friendly in a certain high place if that you would be well loved there."

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And he made answer : “ By my faith, my lady, I know not wherefore you speak thus, or the purport of your words, neither am I Duke or Count to have right to love in so high a place, and, moreover, in nowise could I win the love of so sovereign a lady even if I made great endeavour thereto.”

“ You have, perchance,” said she. “ There has happened many a greater marvel, and the like may happen again. Tell me if you do not now know that I have given you my love, I who am a lady of high degree.”

And forthwith the Knight made answer : “ My lady, I know it not, but I would desire to possess your love in a right and honourable way. But may God preserve me from that love between you and me which would bring shame to my lord, for by no means would I in anywise undertake aught so dishonourable as to cause base and disloyal wrong to my rightful and liege lord.”

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 23

“For shame!” said she, wrathful. “And who, Sir Knave, asked this of you?”

“Ah, my lady,” said he, “I well understand, thank God, but I have said enough.”

And no more did she hold speech with him, but in her heart she was very wroth and much cast down, and she thought within herself that if she could, certes she would be avenged of him, for she was much an-angered. And that night, as she lay beside the Duke, she began to sigh, and then to weep. And forthwith the Duke asked of her what ailed her, and bade her straightway tell him. Then said she: “Truly it greatly grieves me that a noble lord knows not who is faithful to him, and who is not, and, moreover, bestows goodwill and honour on those who are traitors to him, though he perceives it not.”

“By my faith, lady,” said the Duke, “I know not wherefore you speak thus, but of this I am



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quit, for by no means would I wittingly nourish a traitor."

"Then hate this one," said she (and she named unto him the Knight), "who has ceased not the whole day long to pray me for my love. Longtime, said he, had he thought on this, but ne'er had he dared utter it. And I was resolved, good sire, to make it known unto you, for it may be true that he has longwhiles thought on this, for never have we heard tell that he loves another. So I pray you, in requital, to protect your honour, since you know this to be right."

And the Duke, to whom this seemed very grievous, made answer : "This shall I settle, and that, I bethink me, right soon."

And that night the Duke was ill at ease, and had no sleep because of the Knight, whom he loved, since he believed that he had done him such wrong as to have justly forfeited his love.

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 25

And all that night he lay awake. And on the morrow he arose early, and sent for him whom his wife had caused him to hate, albeit he had done no wrong. And as soon as they were alone together he said : "Truly is it distressful to think that you are so brave and so handsome, and yet without loyalty. In this have you much deceived me, for longwhile have I thought you faithful and loyal, at least to me, for I have loved you. I know not how so traitorous a thought could have come to you as to ask of the Duchess her love. Such treachery have you committed, that naught more villainous could be conceived. Quit my territory forthwith, for certes I banish you from it, and wholly forbid and deny it unto you. Never enter it more, and know well that if ever I chance to catch you in it, I will have you hanged."

And when the Knight heard this, he was filled with anger and vexation, so that he trembled in



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every limb when he thought on his Love, of whom he knew that he could have no joy if that he could not go to and fro, and return to the country whence the Duke would banish him; and great dole made he also that the Duke should unjustly hold him for a disloyal traitor. And he was in such sore trouble, that he thought of himself as dead and as betrayed. "Sire," said he, "for God's sake never believe, or even think, that I have ever been so daring. Certes, never have I for a single day or a single hour thought on that with the which you so wrongfully charge me. Whosoever has told this unto you, has done evil."

"Naught will it avail you to deny it," said the Duke. "Without doubt it is the truth. The lady herself has made known to me the way in which, like a vile traitor, you have besought her, and perchance you have said that to her of the which she keeps silence."

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 27

And the Knight, sore grieved, made answer :  
“My lady has said what it pleases her, and it  
avails me not to gainsay her. Naught that I  
may say can profit me, nor is there aught that I  
can do by the which I may be believed that this  
has never happened.”

“On my soul that is so,” said the Duke, who  
thought on his wife, for verily he felt well  
assured that she had said truly that never had  
one heard tell that the Knight loved another.  
Then said he to the Knight : “If you will  
swear to me on your fealty that you will truly  
make answer to me in that which I shall ask of  
you, by your words I shall know of a certainty  
whether or no you have done that of the which  
I have suspicion against you.”

And the Knight, who desired greatly to turn  
away his lord from the undeserved anger which  
he bare him, and who feared such loss as to quit  
the country where was the one who gave him

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most joy, replied that without demur he would do as the Duke had said, for he thought not but on that which disquieted the Duke, and in nowise did he bethink him that the Duke would question him touching any other matter. And thus he took his oath, and the Duke accepted his plighted word.

And thereupon the Duke said to him : " Know in very truth that I have so loved you heretofore with all my heart, that I could in nowise believe of you such baseness or such villany as the Duchess has told unto me, and not a whit should I hold it as true if this did not make me believe it, and put me in sore doubt, when I observe your demeanour and countenance, and other things beside, by the which it can be known full well that you love some one, whoever it may be ; and as, moreover, it is not known to any one the maiden or the lady whom you love, I bethink me that it may be my wife,

who has told to me that you have besought her love. Thus I cannot be persuaded by aught that any one may say that this is not so, unless you make known to me that you so love another, that you leave me altogether without doubt that I know the whole truth. And if this you will not do, then forthwith shall you depart out of my territory as a perjured man."

And the Knight wist not what to do, for he was put to so difficult a choice, that either way he would lose. If he spake the simple truth, the which he must needs do without he perjured himself, he held himself as lost, for if he did so great wrong as to break the condition which he had with his lady and his love, of a surety he would lose her were she to discover it, and if he told not the truth to the Duke, then would he be a perjured man, and a breaker of his faith, and he would lose both his country and his Love. But naught would he trouble

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about his country if that he kept his Love, whom above all he feared to lose.

And when he had called to mind the great joy and the solace that he had had in her embrace, he thought thus unto himself, that if he did her any hurt, and if by his wrongdoing he lost her, since he could not take her with him, how could he dure without her? It was with him as with the Chatelain of Couci, who having in remembrance only his Love, said in a verse of one of his songs :—

Pardie, Love, cruel is the remembrance  
Now of that sweet solace and company  
And joy mine eyes had in the countenance  
Of her who was both fellow and friend to me.

When I think on her simple courtesy,  
And the sweet words that she was wont to say,  
How can my heart endure in my body?  
Certes, it is an evil thing to stay.

And in such anguish was the Knight, that

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 31

he wot not whether to make known the truth, or to lie and leave the country.

And whilst he thus pondered, and knew not the which would be the better for him, hot tears came into his eyes, and ran down his cheeks, because of the anguish which possessed him, so that his face was quite wet. And the Duke was heavy at heart, for he thought within himself that something there was that the Knight dared not discover unto him. And he said in haste to the Knight: "I see well that you do not trust in me as much as you should. Bethink you that if you privily tell me your secret, I shall make it known unto any one? Certes, before doing this, I would let my teeth be pulled out one by one."

"Ah!" made answer the Knight, "God's mercy on me, sire, I wot not what I should say or what will happen to me, but rather would I die than lose her whom I should lose if I told



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unto you the truth, and she came to know that, whilst I yet lived, I had confessed it."

Then said the Duke : "I swear to you on my body, and on my soul, and on the love and faith that I owe to you in return for your homage, that in all my life it shall neither be told by me to any living creature, nor shall allusion of any kind be made thereto."

And the Knight, weeping, said to him : "Sire, then will I tell it to you. I love your niece of Vergi, and she loves me, as much as is possible."

"Tell me now, if you would be believed," said the Duke. "Knows no one save you two of this?"

And the Knight answered him, "Not a living creature."

Then said the Duke : "This can never be ! In what manner, then, do you come to her, and how know you the place and the time?"

“By my faith, sire,” said he, “that will I tell you forthwith, without concealing aught, since you know thus much of our affair.” And then he recounted unto him all his goings to and fro, and the prior compact, and the behaviour of the little dog.

Then said the Duke: “I demand of you your consent that, at your next tryst, I be your companion, and go with you to this place, for I would know without delay that all is so, and my niece will know naught of it.”

“Sire,” said the Knight, “willingly do I consent to this provided it will not give you trouble or weary you, and know forsooth that I go this very night.”

And the Duke said that he would go, and that in nowise would it weary him, but would be to him a solace and a pleasure. And together they devised where they could fitly meet.

And as soon as it was nightfall, as the place

C

### 34 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

where the Duke's niece dwelt was nigh at hand, they betook them thither until they were come to the garden, and there the Duke waited not long ere he saw his niece's little dog come to the corner of the orchard, where it found the Knight, who made much ado over it. . And the Knight at once left the Duke, and went his way. And the Duke followed after him close to the chamber, and there remained quite still. And he concealed himself as he best could. And by a lofty and spreading tree, well fitted to screen him, he was hidden as by a shield. And from there he saw the little dog enter the chamber, and then saw his niece come forth and go towards the Knight in the meadow, and he saw and heard the greeting she gave him by joyfully calling to him, and waving her hand. And she clasped him in her fair arms, and kissed him more than an hundred times ere they held converse together. And the Knight kissed

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 35

her oft, and clasped her in his arms and said to her : "My lady, my love, my friend, my heart, my mistress, my hope, and all that I love, know that I have greatly hungered to be with you, even as I am now, since last I saw you."

And she answered him : "My sweet lord and friend, and my dear love, never has a day or an hour passed that I have not wearied of the delay. But now naught troubles me, for I have by me all that I desire as you are well and content. May you be very happy !"

And the Knight said : "May you be welcome !"

And the Duke, who was crouching down quite close to them at the door, heard all, and so well were the voice and the manner of his niece known to him, that no longer was he in doubt, and he determined that that which the Duchess had told unto him was false, and greatly was he pleased, for now he saw well

### 36 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

that the Knight had wronged him not in such manner as he had had suspicion of him.

And there remained he all the night, whilst the Lady and the Knight were in the chamber in a bed, and, without sleeping, had such happiness and solace one of another, that it is but fitting that no one should speak of it, or give heed to it, who expects not to have that joy which love gives for reward to those who love truly; for he who expects not such joy, naught does he understand when he hears tell of it, since he has not his heart set towards love, for none can in anywise know of what worth is such joy if love has not made it known to him. And this happiness comes by no means to all, for it is a joy without bitterness, as well as a solace and a delight. But to the lover it seems to last but a short while, and that it will never dure long enough. And so pleasing to him is the life he leads, that he would that

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 37

the night were a week, and that the week were a month, and the month a year, and the year three years, and three years twenty, and twenty years an hundred. And when it is ended, he would that the night should come over again before the day break.

In suchwise pondered he whom the Duke awaited. But it behoved him to depart ere break of day, and his Love came with him to the door. And as they took leave one of another, the Duke saw kisses given, and kisses returned, and he heard deep sighs and weeping as they bade each other farewell. Then many tears were shed, and the Duke heard them name the time when they should again meet there. Thus did the Knight depart, and the lady closed the door. But as long as she could see him, she followed him with her beautiful eyes, since naught beside could she do.

And when the Duke saw that the door was

### 38 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

closed, he forthwith went his way until he was come up with the Knight, who complained unto himself that too shortwhile for him had the night dured. And she from whom he had parted thought and spake in like manner, for it seemed to her that the night had been too short for her delight, and she welcomed not the dawn.

Thus thought and spake the Knight as the Duke came up with him and embraced him, and made much ado over him. Then said the Duke to him : "I swear to you that ever henceforth I shall love you, and never again shall I harry you, for all that you have told unto me is true, and you have not lied by one word unto me."

"Sire," said the Knight, "I pray you thanks. But by the grace of God, I demand and pray of you that you disclose not this secret, else shall I lose my Love, and all joy and comfort, and

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 39

without doubt I shall die if I know that another than you have knowledge of it."

"Speak not of it," said the Duke, "and know that it will be so well kept secret, that no word of it shall ever be uttered by me."

And thus communing, they came to the place whence they had set out. And that day, when they were met to eat, the Duke looked more kindly at the Knight than ever before, and indeed so filled with anger and mortification at this was the Duchess, that she arose from the table, and feigned to be overcome of sickness, and she went to lay her down on her bed, where she had little delight. And the Duke, when he had well feasted, and washed, straightway went to her, and made her to sit up on her bed, and commanded that none save himself should remain in the chamber. And forthwith it was done as he commanded.

And the Duke at once asked of her how this



## 40 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

sickness had come to her, and what ailed her. And she made answer: "My God! never until now, when I sat me down to eat, did I suspect that you had not in you more of sense and reason than I perceived when you treated as more dear to you than ever, him who I have told you has sought to shame and humiliate me; and when I saw that you looked on him more kindly even than afore, such great sorrow and anger took possession of me, that no longer could I stay."

"Ah, sweet friend!" said the Duke, "know that never shall I believe, either of you or any other, that ever by any chance has that happened of the which you have told me, for I wot well that he is wholly quit of it, and that he never took thought to do this. Thus much have I learnt of his affair. So inquire not further of me concerning this."

And thereupon the Duke left her, and she

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 41

remained very pensive, for never a day that she lived would she have an hour's peace until she had learnt more of that of the which the Duke had forbidden her to question him ; and now no prohibition could restrain her, for a ruse suggested itself unto her by the which she could of a certainty know all if she but waited patiently until the night, when she had the Duke in her embrace. Well knew she that without doubt such solace would win her her desire better than aught else. Therefore for this she waited, and when the Duke was come to bed, she withdrew to one side. And she made pretence that it gave her no joy that the Duke should be beside her, for well knew she that to make semblance of anger was the way to make her husband yield. Therefore thus did she remain, that she might the better make the Duke believe that she was much an-angered. And as soon as he had kissed her, she said : "Very false and

## 42 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

treacherous and disloyal are you, who make show of love for me, and yet have never loved me for a single day. Longwhile have I been so foolish as to believe you when you have oft-times told me that you loved me with a loyal heart ; but now I well see that in this I have been deceived."

And the Duke said : " In what manner ? "

" By my faith," said she, filled with evil longing, " already have you enjoined that I adventure not to make inquiry concerning that which you are now so well acquainted with."

" In God's name, of what are you thinking ? "

" Of that which that man has related unto you," said she, " and the lies and the deceits which he has made you give heed to and to believe. But no desire have I to know of this, for of little worth do I deem it to love you with a loyal heart ; for whether it was for good or ill, never did I see or hear aught which I did not

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 43

make known to you at once. And now I see that, of your grace, you hide from me your own thoughts. Therefore know, without doubt, that never more shall I have such trust in you, or such love of you, as I have had heretofore."

Then began the Duchess to weep and to sigh, and she made as much ado as she could. And such pity had the Duke for her, that he said to her: "My sweet friend, by no means can I endure your anger or your wrath; but know that I cannot tell you that which you desire without committing too great villainy."

And at once she made answer: "Sire, if you tell it not to me, then from this I see well that apparently you trust me not to keep your secret. And know that I much marvel at this, for never has any secret, either great or small, that you have told me, been made known by me, and

#### 44 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

I tell you in good faith that never, whiles I live, will this come to pass."

And when she had thus spoken, she again wept. And the Duke embraced and kissed her, and so ill at ease was his mind, that no longer could he resist his desire to discover unto her the secret. Wherefore he said to her: "By my soul, dear lady, I know not what to do, for so great trust have I in you, that I believe me it is not right to hide from you aught that I have knowledge of; but greatly do I fear that you will repeat it. Know then, and I now forewarn you, that if you betray me, you shall die for it."

And she said: "Wholly do I agree to this. It cannot be that I should do you any wrong."

Then he who loved her, for that he believed her, and thought within himself that she spake truly unto him, related unto her all the story of his niece, even as he had learnt it from the

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 45

Knight, and how that he was in a corner of the orchard where only they two were, when the little dog came to them. And he told her truly of her coming out, and of their going in together, and kept back from her naught of that which he had seen and heard. And when the Duchess heard that the Knight loved one of lower rank, and for this had rejected her, she seemed to herself as dead and despised, but never did she let this be seen, but agreed, and made promise to the Duke, to keep the matter secret, and that if it should be made known by her, then might he hang her up to a branch.

And she longed greatly to have speech with her whom she hated from that hour when she learnt that she was the Love of him who had brought on her both shame and grief, because he would not, so she thought, be her own Love. And she firmly resolved that if at any time, or in any place, she saw the Duke speak

## 46 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

with his niece, at once would she herself speak with her, and would not keep back that in which there would be felony. But never did this chance until the time of Pentecost was come, at the first feast when the Duke held plenary Court, to the which he sent to summon all the ladies of the land, and, before all, his niece, who was chatelaine of Vergi.

And as soon as the Duchess saw her, immediately all her blood was stirred within her, since she hated her more than all else in the world. But she knew how to hide her feelings, and welcomed her more graciously than ever she had done aforetime. But very greatly did she long to speak of that which so much angered her, and the delay grieved her much. And on the day of Pentecost, when the tables were removed, the Duchess led the ladies aside to her chamber to deck them for to appear quaintly dressed at the carole. Then the Duchess, who

perceived her opportunity, could not restrain herself, and said, as though in a jest: "Chatelaine, make you very quaint, for you have as acquaintance a handsome and brave lover."

And she made answer simply: "Of a truth, my lady, I know not what acquaintance you have in mind, but I desire not to have for lover any one who may not be in all things to mine own honour, and to that of my lord."

"Right well do I grant this," said the Duchess, "but you are a clever mistress to have learned how to train the little dog."

And the ladies heard what was said, but knew not to what it referred. And then they went with the Duchess to the caroles which were going on.

And the Chatelaine remained behind. And her heart was filled with anguish, and she paled and wholly changed colour. And she withdrew



## 48 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

into an inner chamber where lay a handmaiden at the foot of the bed, though she could not see her. And the Chatelaine, grieving sorely, sank down on to the bed, and made complaint and lamentation unto herself, and said : " Alas, my God, have pity on me ! How comes it that I have heard my lady reproach me in that I have made use of my little dog ? That, as I well know, she can have learned from no one save from him whom I loved, and who has betrayed me. Never could he have told it unto her were it not that they have had close acquaintance, and that, since that he has betrayed me, he doubtless loves her more than he does me ! Well do I now perceive that he loves me not at all since he fails in his oath to me. Dear God ! I loved him as much as any one could love another, and not an hour of the day or of the night could I think of any other. For he was my joy and my pleasure, he was my delight

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 49

and my happiness, he was my solace and my comfort. How I ever thought on him even when I saw him not ! Ah, my Love ! how has this come to pass ? What can have chanced to you since you have been false to me ? I bethought me, God bless me ! that you would be more loyal to me than was Tristram to Isoud. I loved you, may God have pity on me ! far more than I did myself. Never at any time have I been guilty in thought, word, or deed, be it great or small, for the which you should hate me, or so basely betray me, as to set at naught our love to love another, and to forsake me and discover our secret. Alas, my Love ! greatly do I marvel, for my heart, so help me God ! was never thus toward you ; for if all the world, and even all His heaven and His Paradise, had been given to me by God, I would not have taken them if for them I had had to lose you, for you were my strength and my life and my

D

## 50 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

joy, and naught could have wounded me so much as that my sad heart should know that yours no longer loved me. Ah, wondrous love ! Who would have thought that he could do me hurt who said, when he was with me, and I did my utmost to do all his pleasure, that he was all mine, and that he held me as his lady both in body and soul ? And so sweetly did he say it unto me, that verily I believed him, nor could I in any way have thought that, for the sake of either Duchess or Queen, he could find in his heart anger and hatred against me ; for such delight was it to love him, that I took his heart to mine own, and moreover I thought of him that he would be my friend all his life long, for well I knew in my heart that if he had died before me, so much did I love him, little while after him could I have dured. Better were it for me to be dead with him, than to live, if I could never see him more. Ah, wondrous love ! Is it

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 51

right, then, that he has made known our secret, by the which he loses me? When I freely gave him my love, I said to him, and truly made covenant with him, that whensoever he made known our love, he would lose me. And as now I have lost him, I cannot live after such sorrow, nor without him for whom I mourn, do I desire so to do. No longer have I any pleasure of my life, and so I pray God to send me death, and that as, in very truth, I have loyally loved him who has so repaid me, He may have pity on my soul, and grant that honour may come to him who has wrongfully betrayed me and delivered me over unto death, and I pardon him. And my death, meseemeth, is sweet since it comes from him, and when I have in remembrance his love, it grieves me not to die for him."

Then the Chatelaine ceased speaking, save to say with a sigh, "Sweet friend, I commend you

## 52 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

to God." And at these words she clasped her arms tightly together, and her heart failed her, and her face changed colour, and she swooned with anguish, and lay dead in the middle of the bed, pale and without colour.

But her Love, who amused himself in the hall at the carole and the dance, knew naught of this, but naught that he saw there gave him pleasure since he saw not her to whom he had given his heart, at the which he marvelled greatly. And he whispered to the Duke: "Sire, how comes it that your niece so long while remains away, and comes not to the carole? I know not whether you have sent her to prison!"

And the Duke, who had not noticed this, cast a glance at the carole, and then he took the Knight by the hand, and straightway repaired to the chamber. And when he found her not there, he commanded and counselled



*in the hall, at the  
carole and the dance*



## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 53

the Knight to seek her in the inner chamber, for he willed it in suchwise so that they might have solace one of another with embraces and kisses. And the Knight, who was very grateful to him for this, entered the inner chamber where his Love lay on her back on the bed, livid and without colour. And having opportunity for this, and pleasure in it, he forthwith clasped her in his arms, and kissed her, but he found that her mouth was cold, and that she was all pale and stiff, and from her appearance he saw well that she was quite dead. And at once, all aghast, he cried out : "What is it, alas ? Is my Love dead ?"

And the handmaiden who lay at the foot of the bed hastened to him and said : "Sire, verily do I believe that she is dead, for since she came here, she has done naught but torment herself because of the anger of her Love, and a little dog, about the which my lady had harassed



## 54 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

and taunted her, the trouble of which has killed her.”

And when the Knight heard that the words which he had spoken to the Duke had killed her, without measure was he discomfited. “Alas, my sweet Love!” said he, “the most courteous and the best and the most loyal that ever was, as a disloyal traitor I have caused your death. It would be just that on me should have fallen this fate, and that no ill should have come to you. But you had so loyal a heart, that you have taken it beforehand upon yourself. But I shall do justice upon myself because of the treachery that I have committed.”

And then he drew from its sheath a sword that hung upon a nail, and ran it through his heart, and he fell on the other body, and so much did he bleed, that he died.

And the handmaiden rushed forth when she





*"And forthwith he went to  
the Duchess . . . and  
struck her on the head with  
the naked sword"*

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 55

saw the lifeless bodies. Dismayed was she at what she saw. And to the Duke, whom she met, she told all that she had heard and seen, and kept back from him naught of how the affair began, and also of the little trained dog about which the Duchess had spoken.

Then was the Duke mad with rage. And straightway he entered the chamber, and drew out of the body of the Knight the sword with the which he had killed himself. Then, without making further inquiry, he at once went with great haste straight to the carole. And forthwith he went to the Duchess, and made good his promise to her, and without uttering a word, struck her on the head with the naked sword which he held, so wrathful was he. And the Duchess fell at his feet in the sight of all those of the land, and thereat the knights who were assembled there were sore distressed, after that they had had great joy. And then the

## 56 THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

Duke, in the hearing of all who would hear it, told the whole affair before all the Court.

And none were there who did not weep, above all when they saw the two lovers who were dead, as well as the Duchess. And the Court separated in mourning and anger and sorry confusion. And on the morrow the Duke caused the lovers to be buried in one grave, and the Duchess in another place. But from this adventure he had such sorrow, that never again was he heard to laugh. And forthwith he went on a crusade beyond the sea, from whence he returned not, for there he became a Templar.

Ah, God ! All this distress and trouble came to the Knight because he so mischanced as to make known that which he ought to have kept secret, and which his Love had forbidden him to speak of so long as he would possess her love.

## THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI 57

And from this example one ought to keep secret one's love with such great judgment, that one may always have in remembrance that to discover it avails naught, and that to hide it is of profit in every way. Whosoever does this, fears not the attacks of false and inquisitive felons who pry into the loves of others.









# LA CHASTELAIN DE VERGI







## LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

**U**NE maniere de gent sont  
Qui d'estre loial samblant font

Et de si bien conseil celer

Qu'il se covient en aus fier ; 4

Et quant vient qu'aucuns s'i descuevre

Tant qu'il sevent l'amor et l'uevre,

Si l'espandent par le païs

Et en font lor gas et lor ris ; 8

Si avient que cil joie en pert

Qui le conseil a descouvert,

Quar tant com l'amor est plus grant

Sont plus mari li fin amant, 12

Quant li uns d'aus de l'autre croit

Qu'il ait dit ce que celer doit ;

## 64 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Et sovent tel meschief en vient  
Que l'amor faillir en covient 16  
A grant dolor et a vergoingne,  
Si comme il avint en Borgoingne  
D'un chevalier preu et hardi  
Et de la dame de Vergi 20  
Que li chevaliers tant ama  
Que la dame li otria  
Par itel couvenant s'amor  
Qu'il seüst qu'a l'eure et au jor 24  
Que par lui seroit descouverte  
Lor amor, qu'il i avroit perte  
Et de l'amor et de l'otroi  
Qu'ele li avoit fet de soi. 28  
Et, a cele amor otroier,  
Deviserent qu'en .I. vergier  
Li chevaliers toz jors vendroit  
Au terme qu'ele li metroit, 32  
Ne ne se mouvroit d'un anglet  
De si que .I. petit chienet

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 65

Verroit par le vergier aler,  
Et lors venist sanz demorer 36  
En sa chambre, et si setüst bien  
Qu'a cele eure n'i avroit rien  
Fors la dame tant seulement.  
Ainsi le firent longuement, 40  
Et fu l'amor douce et celee,  
Que fors aus ne le sot riens nee.  
Li chevaliers fu biaux et cointes  
Et par sa valor fu acointes 44  
Au duc qui Borgoingne tenoit ;  
Et sovent aloit et venoit  
A la cort, et tant i ala  
Que la duchoise l'enama 48  
Et li fist tel samblant d'amors  
Que, s'il n'eüst le cuer aillors,  
Bien se petüst apercevoir  
Par samblant que l'amast por voir. 52  
Mes quel samblant qu'el en feüst,  
Li chevaliers samblant n'en fist,

E



## 66 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Que poi ne grant s'aperceüst  
 Qu'ele vers li amor eüst, 56  
 Et tant qu'ele en ot grant anui,  
 Qu'ele parla .I. jor a lui  
 Et mist a reson par moz teus :  
 "Sire, vous estes biaux et preus, 60  
 Ce dient tuit, la Dieu merci :  
 Si avrëez bien deservi  
 D'avoir amie en si haut leu  
 Qu'en eüssiez honor et preu. 64  
 Que bien vous serroit tele amie !  
 —Ma dame," fet il, "je n'ai mie  
 Encore a ce mise m'entente.  
 —Par foi," dist ele, "longue atente 68  
 Vous porroit nuire, ce m'est vis :  
 Si lo que vous soiez amis  
 En .I. haut leu, se vous veez  
 Que vous i soiez bien amez." 72  
 Cil respont : "Ma dame, par foi,  
 Je ne sai mie bien por qoi

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 67

Vous le dites ne que ce monte,  
Ne je ne sui ne duc ne conte 76  
Que si hautement amer doie ;  
Ne je ne sui mie a .II. doie  
D'amer dame si souveraine,  
Se je bien i metoie paine. 80  
—Si estes,” fet el, “se devient :  
Mainte plus grant merveille avient  
Et autele avendra encore.  
Dites moi se vous savez ore 84  
Se je vous ai m'amor donee,  
Qui sui haute dame honoree.”  
Et cil respont isnel le pas :  
“Ma dame, je ne le sai pas ; 88  
Mes je voudroie vostre amor  
Avoir par bien et par honor.  
Mes de cele amor Dieus me gart  
Qu'a moi n'a vous tort cele part 92  
Ou la honte mon seignor gise ;  
Qu'a nul fuer ne a nule guise

## 68 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

N'enprendroie tel mesprison  
 Com de fere tel desreson 96  
 Si vilaine et si desloial  
 Vers mon droit seignor natural.  
 —Fi ! ” fet cele qui fu marie,  
 “ Dans musars, et qui vous en prie ? 100  
 —Ha ! ma dame, por Dieu merci,  
 Bien le sai, mes tant vous en di.”

Cele ne tint a lui plus plait,  
 Mes grant corouz et grant deshait 104  
 En ot au cuer, et si penssa,  
 S'ele puet, bien s'en vengera :  
 Si fu ele forment irie.  
 La nuit, quant ele fu couchie 108  
 Joust le duc, a souspirer  
 Commença et puis a plorer,  
 Et li dus errant li demande  
 Que c'est qu'ele a, et li commande 112

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 69

Qu'ele li die maintenant :

“Certes,” fait ele, “j'ai duel grant

De ce que ne set nus hauz hom

Qui foi li porte ne qui non, 116

Mes plus de bien et d'onor font

A ceus qui lor trahitor sont,

Et si ne s'en aperçoit nus.

—Par foi, dame, “fet soi li dus, 120

“Je ne sai por quoi vous le dites ;

Mes de tel chose sui je quites,

Qu'a nul fuer je ne norriroie

Trahitor, se je le savoie. 124

—Haez donc,” fait ele, “celui,”

S'el nomma, “qui ne fina hui

De moi proier au lonc du jor

Que je li donaisse m'amor, 128

Et me dist que mout a lonc tens

Qu'il a este en cest porpens ;

Onques mes ne le m'osa dire.

Et je me porpenssai, biaux sire, 132

70 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Tantost que je le vous diroie.  
 Et si puet estre chose vraie  
 Qu'il ait pieça a ce pense :  
 De ce qu'il a aillors ame 136

Novele oïe n'en avon.  
 Si vous requier en guerredon  
 Que vostre honor si i gardoiz  
 Com vous savez que ce est droiz." 140  
 Li dus, a cui samble mout grief,  
 Li dist : "J'en vendrai bien a chief,  
 Et mout par tens, si com je cuit."

A malaise fu cele nuit 144  
 Li dus ; n'onques dormir ne pot  
 Por le chevalier qu'il amot,  
 Qu'il croit que cil eüst mesfait  
 Par droit que s'amor perdue ait ; 148  
 Et por ce toute nuit veilla.  
 L'endemain par matin leva,

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 71

Et fist celui a soi venir  
Que sa fame li fet hair, 152  
Sanz ce que de riens ait mespris.  
Maintenant l'a a reson mis  
Seul a seul, ne furent qu'eus deus :  
"Certes," fait il, "ce est granz deus 156  
Quant proesce avez et beaute,  
Et il n'a en vous leaute !  
Si m'en avez mout decetü,  
Que j'ai mout longuement creü 160  
Que vous fussiez de bone foi  
Loiaus a tout le mains vers moi,  
Que j'ai vers vous amor eüe.  
Si ne sai dont vous est venue 164  
Tel penssee et si trahitresse  
Que proie avez la duchesse  
Et requise de druerie !  
Si avez fet grant tricherie, 168  
Que plus vilaine n'estuet querre.  
Issiez errant hors de ma terre !

## 72 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Quar je vous en congie sanz doute,  
 Et la vous ve et desfent toute : 172  
 Si n'i entrez ne tant ne quant,  
 Que, se je des or en avant  
 Vous i pooie fere prendre,  
 Sachiez je vous feroie pendre." 176  
 Quant li chevaliers ce entent,  
 D'ire et de mautalent esprent  
 Si que tuit li tramblent si membre,  
 Que de s'amie li remembre 180  
 Dont il set qu'il ne puet joïr  
 Se n'est par aler et venir  
 Et par reperier ou pais  
 Dont li dus veut qu'il soit eschis ; 184  
 Et d'autre part li fet mout mal  
 Ce qu'a trahitor desloial  
 Le tient ses sires et a tort.  
 Si est en si grant desconfort 188  
 Qu'a mort se tient et a trahi :  
 "Sire," fet il, "por Dieu merci,

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 73

Ne creez ja ne ne pensez  
Que je fusse onques si osez : 192  
Ce que me metez a tort seure  
Je ne penssai ne jor ne eure ;  
S'a mal fet qui le vous a dit.  
—Ne vous vaut riens li escondit,” 196  
Fet li dus, “ ne point n'en i a :  
Cele meïsmes conte m'a  
En quel maniere et en quel guise  
Vous l'avez proie et requise, 200  
Comme trahitres envious ;  
Et tel chose deïstes vous,  
Puet estre, dont ele se test.  
—Ma dame a dit ce que li plect,” 204  
Fet cel qui mout estoit marriz,  
“ Ne m'i vaut riens li escondiz ;  
Riens ne m'i vaut que j'en deïsse :  
Si n'est riens que je n'en fetsse 208  
Par si que j'en fusse creü,  
Quar de ce n'i a riens eü.



74 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

—Si a,” ce dist li dus, “par m’ame,”

A cui il souvient de sa fame, 212

Car bien cuidoit por voir savoir

Que sa fame li deïst voir,

C’onques n’oï que nus parlast

Que cil en autre lieu amast. 216

Dont dist li dus au chevalier :

“Se vous me volez afier

Par vostre leal serement

Que vous me direz vraiment 220

Ce que je vous demanderoie,

Par vostre dit certains seroie

Se vous avriiez fet ou non

Ce dont j’ai vers vous soupeçon.” 224

Cil qui tout covoite et desire

A geter son seignor de l’ire

Qu’il a envers li sanz deserte,

Et qui redoute tele perte 228

Comme de guerpier la contree

Ou cele est qui plus li agree,

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 75

Respont qu'il tout sanz contredit  
Fera ce que li dus a dit, 232  
Qu'il ne pense ne ne regarde  
De ce dont li dus se prent garde,  
Ne torment ne le lest pensser  
Ce que li dus veut demander, 236  
De riens fors de cele proiere :  
Le serement en tel maniere  
L'en fist, li dus la foi en prist ;  
Et li dus maintenant li dist : 240  
"Sachiez par fine verite  
Que ce que je vous ai ame  
Ça en arriere de fin cuer  
Ne me lesse croire a nul fuer 244  
De vous tel mesfet ne tel honte  
Comme la duchoise me conte,  
Ne tant ne le tenisse a voire,  
Se ce ne le me feïst croire 248  
Et me meïst en grant doutance  
Que j'esgart vostre contenance

76 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Et de cointise et d'autre rien,  
 A quoi l'en puet savoir mout bien 252  
 Que vous amez ou que ce soit ;  
 Et quant d'ailors ne s'aperçoit  
 Nus qu'amez damoisele ou dame,  
 Je me pens que ce soit ma fame, 256  
 Qui me dist que vous la proiez.  
 Si ne puis estre desvoiez  
 Por rien que nus m'en puisse fere,  
 Que je croi qu'ainsi soit l'afere, 260  
 Se vous ne me dites qu'ailors  
 Amez en tel leu par amors  
 Que m'en lessiez sanz nule doute  
 Savoir en la verite toute. 264  
 Et se ce fere ne volez,  
 Comme parjurs vous en alez  
 Hors de ma terre sanz deloi ! ”  
 Cil ne set nul conseil de soi, 268  
 Que le geu a parti si fort  
 Que l'un et l'autre tient a mort ;

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 77

Quar, s'il dit la verite pure,  
Qu'il dira s'il ne se parjure, 272  
A mort se tient ; s'il mesfet tant  
Qu'il trespasse le couvenant  
Qu'a sa dame et a s'amie a,  
Il est seturs qu'il la perdra, 276  
S'ele s'en puet apercevoir ;  
Et s'il ne dit au duc le voir,  
Parjures est et foimentie,  
Et pert le païs et s'amie. 280  
Mes du païs ne li chausist,  
Se s'amie li remainsist  
Que sor toute riens perdre crient.  
Et por ce qu'ades li sovient 284  
De la grant joie et du solaz  
Qu'il a eü entre ses braz,  
Si se pensse, s'il la messert  
Et s'il par son mesfet la pert, 288  
Quant o soi ne l'en puet mener,  
Comment porra sanz li durer.

78 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Si est en tel point autressi  
 Com li chastelains de Couci, 292  
 Qui au cuer n'avoit s'amor non,  
 Et dist en .I. vers de chançon :

*Par Dieu, Amors, fort m'est a consirrer  
 Du dous solaz et de la compaingnie 296  
 Et des samblanz que m'i soloit moustrer  
 Cele qui m'ert et compaingne et amie :  
 Et quant regart sa simple cortoisie  
 Et les douz mos qu'a moi soloit parler, 300  
 Comme me puet li cuers ou cors durer ?  
 Quant il n'en part, certes trop est mauves.*

Li chevaliers en tel angoisse  
 Ne set se le voir li connoisse, 304  
 Ou il mente et lest le païs.  
 Et quant il est ainsi penssis  
 Qu'il ne set li quels li vaut mieus,  
 L'eve du cuer li vient aus ieus 308  
 Por l'angoisse qu'il se porchace,  
 Et li descent aval la face,

LA CHASTELAIN DE VERGI 79

Si qu'il en a le vis moillie.  
Li dus n'en a pas le cuer lie, 312  
Qui pense qu'il i a tel chose  
Que reconnoistre ne li ose.  
Lors dist li dus isnel le pas :  
"Bien voi que ne vous fiez pas 316  
En moi tant com vous devriiez.  
Cuidiez vous, se vous me disiez  
Votre conseil celeement,  
Que jel desse a nule gent ? 320  
Je me leroie avant sanz faute  
Trere les denz l'un avant l'autre.  
—Ha !" fet cil, "por Dieu merci, sire,  
Je ne sai que je doie dire 324  
Ne que je puisse devenir,  
Mes je voudroie mieus morir  
Que perdre ce que je perdroie,  
Se le voir dit vous en avoie, 328  
Et il estoit de li set  
Que l'etisse reconneü

## 80 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

A jor qui fust a mon vivant !”  
 Lors dist li dus : “ Je vous creant                    332  
 Seur le cors et l'ame de moi  
 Et sor l'amor et sor la foi  
 Que je vous doi sor vostre homage,  
 Que ja en trestout mon eage                    336  
 N'en ert a creature nee  
 Par moi novele racontee  
 Ne samblant fet grant ne petit.”  
 Et cil en plorant li a dit :                    340  
 “ Sire, jel vous dirai ainsi :  
 J'aim vostre niece de Vergi,  
 Et ele moi, tant c'on puet plus.  
 — Or me dites donc,” fet li dus,                    344  
 “ Quant vous volez c'on vous en croie  
 Set nus fors vous dui ceste joie ?”  
 Et li chevaliers li respont :  
 “ Nenil, creature del mont.”                    348  
 Et dist li dus : “ Ce n'avint onques :  
 Comment i avenez vous donques,

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 81

Ne comment savez lieu ne tens ?

— Par foi, sire,” fet cil, “par sens 352

Que je vous dirai, sanz riens tere,

Quant tant savez de nostre afere.”

Lors li a toutes acontees

Ses venues et ses alees, 356

Et la couvenance premiere,

Et du petit chien la maniere.

Lors dist li dus : “ Je vous requier

Que a vostre terme premier 360

Vueilliez que vostre compains soie

D’aler o vous en ceste voie,

Quar je vueil savoir sanz aloigne

Se ainsi va vostre besoingne : 364

Si n’en savra ma niece rien.

— Sire,” fet il, “ je l’otroi bien,

Mes qu’il ne vous griet ne anuit ;

Et sachiez bien g’irai anuit.” 368

Et li dus dist qu’il i ira,

Que ja ne li anuiera,

F



## 82 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Ainz li sera solaz et geu.

Entr'aus ont devise le leu 372

Ou assembleront tout a pie.

Si tost comme fu anuitie,

Car asses pres d'iluec estoit

Ou la niece le duc manoit. 376

Cele part tienent lor chemin

Tant qu'il sont venu au jardin,

Ou li dus ne fu pas grant piece,

Quant il vit le chienet sa niece 380

Qui s'en vint au bout du vergier

Ou il trova le chevalier,

Qui grant joie a fet au chienet.

Tantost a la voie se met 384

Li chevaliers, et le duc lait ;

Et li dus apres lui s'en vait

Pres de la chambre et ne se muet.

Iluec s'esconsse au mieus qu'il puet : 388

D'un arbre mout grant et mout large

S'estoit couvers com d'une targe

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 83

Et mout entent a lui celer.  
D'iluec vit en la chambre entrer 392  
Le chienet, et ainssy issir  
Sa niece et contre lui venir  
Hors de la chambre en .I. prael,  
Et vit et oï tel apel 396  
Comme ele li fist par solaz  
De salut de bouche et de braz :  
Et de ses biaux braz l'acola  
Et plus de .C. foiz le besa 400  
Ainz que feïst longue parole.  
Et cil la rebese et acole,  
Et li dist : "Ma dame, m'amie,  
M'amor, mon cuer, ma druerie, 404  
M'esperance et tout quanques j'aim,  
Sachiez que j'ai eü grant faim  
D'estre o vous si comme ore i sui  
Trestoz jors puis que je n'i fui." 408  
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Mes douz amis, ma douce amor,

# 84 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Onques puis ne fu jor ne eure  
 Que ne m'anuiast la demeure ; 412  
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 Car j'ai o moi ce que je vueil,  
 Quant si estes sains et haitiez.  
 Et li tres bien venuz soiez ! " 416  
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 Qui mout pres d'aus apoiez fu ;  
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 Si bien, et a la contenance,  
 Qu'or en est il fors de doutance,  
 Et si tient de ce la duchesse  
 Que dit li ot a menterresse, 424  
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 Que cil ne li a mesfet rien  
 De ce dont il l'a mescreü.  
 Ilueques s'est issi tenu 428  
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 Que la dame et li chevaliers

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 85

Dedenz la chambre en .I. lit furent  
Et sans dormir ensemble jurent 432  
A tel joie et a tel deport  
Qu'il n'est resons que nus recort  
Ne ne le die ne ne l'oie,  
S'il n'atent a avoir tel joie 436  
Comme amors a fin amant done,  
Quant sa peine reguerredone ;  
Quar cil qui tel joie n'atent,  
S'il l'ooit or, riens n'i entent 440  
Puis qu'il n'a a amors le cuer,  
Que nus ne savroit a nul fuer  
Combien vaut a tel joie avoir,  
S'amors ne li fesoit savoir ; 444  
Ne teus biens n'avient mie a touz,  
Que ce est joie sanz corouz  
Et solaz et envoiseüre ;  
Mes tant i a que petit dure, 448  
C'est avis a l'amant qui l'a,  
Ja tant longues ne durera ;

## 86 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Tant li plect la vie qu'il maine,  
 Que se nuit devenoit semaine 452  
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 Et mois uns anz et uns anz trois,  
 Et troi an .xx. et vint an cent,  
 Quant vendroit au definement, 456  
 Si voudroit il qu'il anuitast  
 Cele nuit, ainz qu'il ajornast.  
 Et en itel pense estoit  
 Icil que li dus atendoit ; 460  
 Quar ainz jor aler l'en covint,  
 Et s'amie o lui a l'uis vint.  
 La vit li dus au congie prendre  
 Besier doner et besier rendre, 464  
 Et oï forment soupirer  
 Et au congie prendre plorer.  
 Iluec ot plore mainte lerne,  
 Et si oï prendre le terme 468  
 Du rassambler iluec arriere.  
 Li chevaliers en tel maniere

LA CHASTELAIN DE VERGI 87

S'en part, et la dame l'uis clot ;  
Mes tant comme veoir le pot, 472  
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Quant ele ne pot fere mieus.

Quant li dus vit clorre l'uisset,  
Tantost a la voie se met 476  
Tant que le chevalier ataint  
Qui a soi meisme se plaint  
De la nuit : si comme il a dit,  
Trop li avoit dure petit. 480  
Et tel penssee et auteus diz  
Ot cele dont il ert partiz,  
A cui il samble por la nuit  
Que failli ait a son deduit, 484  
Ne du jor ne se loe point.  
Li chevaliers ert en tel point  
Et de penssee et de parole,  
Quant li dus l'ataint ; si l'acole 488

# 88 LA CHASTELAIN DE VERGI

Et li a fet joie mout grant,  
 Pius li a dit : " Je vous creant  
 Que toz jors mes vous amerai  
 Ne james jor ne vous harrai, 492  
 Quar vous m'avez du tout voir dit  
 Et ne m'avez de mot mentit.  
 —Sire, " fet cil," vostre merci !  
 Mes por Dieu vous requier et pri 496  
 Que cest conseil celer vous plaise,  
 Qu' amor perdroie et joie et aise  
 Et morroie sanz nule faute,  
 Se je savoie que nul autre 500  
 Ice savroit fors vous sanz plus.  
 —Or n'en parlez ja," fet li dus ;  
 " Sachiez qu'il ert si bien cele  
 Que ja par moi n'en ert parle." 504

Ainsi s'en sont parlant venu  
 La dont il estoient meü.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 89

Et cel jor quant vint au mengier,  
Moustra li dus au chevalier 508  
Plus biau samblant qu'ainz n'avoit fait,  
Dont tel corouz et tel deshait  
En ot la duchoise sanz fable  
Qu'ele se leva de la table 512  
Et a fet samblant par faintise  
Que maladie li soit prise :  
Alee est couchier en son lit  
Ou ele ot petit de delit. 516  
Et li dus, quant il ot mengie  
Et lave et bien festoie,  
Si l'est tantost alez veoir  
Et la fist sus son lis soir, 520  
Et a commandé que nului  
Ne remaingne leenz fors lui.  
L'en fet tantost ce qu'il commande.  
Et li dus errant li demande 524  
Comment cist maus li est venu  
Et que ce est qu'ele a eü.



90 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Ele respont : “ Se Dieus me gart,  
 Je ne m'en donoie regart 528  
 Oraïns, quant au mengier m'assis,  
 Que greignor sens et plus d'avis  
 N'eüst en vous que je n'i vi,  
 Quant vous tenez plus chier celui 532  
 Que je vous ai dit qui porchace  
 Qu'il a moi honte et despit face ;  
 Et quant vi que plus biau samblant  
 Li feïstes que de devant, 536  
 Si grant duel et si grant ire oi  
 Qu'ilueques demourer ne poi.  
 —Ha,” fet li dus, “ ma douce amie,  
 Sachiez je n'en croiroie mie 540  
 Ne vous ne autre creature  
 Que onques por nule aventure  
 Avenist ce que vous me dites ;  
 Ainz sai bien qu'il en est toz quites, 544  
 N'onques ne penssa de ce fere,  
 Tant ai apris de son afere :

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 91

Si ne m'en enquerez ja plus."

Atant se part d'iluec li dus ; 548

Et ele remest mout penssive

Que james tant com ele vive

Une eure a aise ne sera

Devant que plus apris avra 552

De ce dont li dus li desfent

Qu'ele ne li demant noient,

Mais ja ne l'en tendra desfensse,

Quar en son cuer engin porpensse 556

Qu'ele le porra bien savoir,

S'ele se sueffre jusqu'au soir,

Qu'ele ait le duc entre ses braz :

Ele set bien qu'en tel solaz 560

En fera, lors n'en doute point,

Mieus son vouloir qu'en autre point.

Por ce adonc a tant se tint,

Et quant li dus couchier se vint, 564

92 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

A une part du lit s'est traite ;  
 Samblant fet que point ne li haite  
 Que li dus o li gesir doie,  
 Qu'ele set bien ce est la voie 568  
 De son mari metre au desouz  
 Par fere semblant de corouz.  
 Por ce se tint en itel guise  
 Afin que mieus le duc atise 572  
 A croire que mout soit irie ;  
 Por ce sanz plus qu'il l'a besie  
 Li dist ele : "Mout estes faus  
 Et trichierres et desloiaus, 576  
 Qui moi moustrez samblant d'amor,  
 N'onques ne m'amastes nul jor ;  
 Et j'ai este lonc tens si fole  
 Que j'ai creü vostre parole 580  
 Que soventes foiz disiez,  
 Que de cuer loial m'amiiez ;  
 Mes hui m'en sui aperceüe  
 Que j'en ai este deceüe." 584

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 93

Et li dus dist : “Et vous a qoi ?

—Ja me deïstes par ma foi,”

Fet cele qui a mal i bee,

“Que je ne fusse si osee 588

Que je vous enquerisse rien

De ce que or savez vous bien.

—De qoi, suer, savez vous, por De ?

—De ce que cil vous a conte,” 592

Fet ele, “mençonge et arvoire,

Qu’il vous a fet pensser et croire.

Mes de ce savoir ne me chaut,

Que j’ai pensse que petit vaut 596

A vous amer de cuer loial,

Que c’onques fust ou bien ou mal,

Mes cuers riens ne vit ne ne sot

Que ne seüssiez ausi tost ; 600

Et or voi que vous me celez,

Vostre merci, les voz pensez.

Si sachiez ore sanz doutance

Que james n’avrai tel fiance 604

94 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

En vous ne cuer de tel maniere  
 Com j'ai eü ça en arriere."  
 Lors a commencié a plorer  
 La duchoise et a souspirer, 608  
 Et s'esforça plus qu'ele pot.  
 Et li dus tel pitie en ot  
 Qu'il li a dit : " Ma bele suer,  
 Je ne soufferroie a nul fuer 612  
 Ne vostre corouz ne vostre ire ;  
 Mes sachiez je ne puis pas dire  
 Ce que volez que je vous die  
 Sanz fere trop grant vilonie." 616  
 Ele respont isnel le pas :  
 " Sire, si ne m'en dites pas,  
 Quar je voi bien a cel samblant  
 Qu'en moi ne vous fiez pas tant 620  
 Que celaisse vostre conseil ;  
 Et sachiez que mout me merveil :  
 Ainc n'oïstes grant ne petit  
 Conseil que vous m'etüssiez dit, 624

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 95

Dont descouvers fussiez par moi,  
Et si vous di en bone foi,  
Ja en ma vie n'avendra."  
Quant ce ot dit, si replora ; 628  
Et li dus si l'acole et bese,  
Et est de son cuer a malese  
Si que plus ne se pot tenir  
De sa volente descouvrir. 632  
Puis si li a dit : "Bele dame,  
Je ne sai que face per m'ame,  
Que tant m'afi en vous et croi  
Que chose celer ne vous doi 636  
Que je sache, mes trop me dot  
Que vous n'en parlez aucun mot :  
Sachiez, et itant vous en di,  
Que se je sui par vous trahi, 640  
Vous en receverez la mort."  
Et ele dist : "Bien m'i acort ;  
Estre ne porroit que fëisse  
Chose dont vers vous mespreïsse." 644

96 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Cil qui l'aime por ce le croit  
 Et cuide que veritez soit  
 De ce que li dist, puis li conte  
 De sa niece trestout le conte, 648  
 Comme apris l'ot du chevalier,  
 Et comment il fu el vergier  
 En l'anglet ou il n'ot qu'eus deus,  
 Quant li chienes s'en vint a eus ; 652  
 Et de l'issue et de l'entree  
 Li a la verite contee,  
 Si qu'il ne li a riens tetū  
 Qu'il i ait ot ne vetū. 656  
 Et quant la duchoise l'entent  
 Que cil aime plus bassement  
 Qui de s'amor l'a escondite,  
 Morte se tient et a despite, 660  
 Mes ainc de ce samblant ne fist,  
 Ainçois otroia et promist  
 Au duc a si celer ceste uevre ;  
 Se ce est qu'ele le descuevre, 664

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 97

Que l'en la pende a une hart.

Et si li est il ja mout tart  
D'a celi parler qu'ele het  
Des icele heure qu'ele set 668

Que ele est amie a celui  
Qui li fet et honte et anui  
Por itant, ce li est avis,  
Qu'il ne vout estre ses amis. 672

Si afferme tout son porpens  
Que, s'ele voit ne lieu ne tens  
Qu'a la niece le duc parolt,  
Qu'ele li dira ausi tost, 676

Ne ja ne celera tel chose  
Ou felonie avra enclose.  
Mes ainc en point n'en lieu n'en vint  
Tant qu'a la Pentecouste vint 680

Que ce fu la feste premiere,  
Que li dux tint cort mout pleniére,

G



## 98 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Si qu'il envoia par tout querre  
 Toutes les dames de la terre 684  
 Et sa niece tout premeraine  
 Qui de Vergi ert chastelaine.  
 Et quant la duchoise la vit,  
 Tantost toz li sans li fremist, 688  
 Com cele del mont que plus het.  
 Mes son corage celer set :  
 Si li a fet plus bel atret  
 C'onques devant ne li ot fet ; 692  
 Mes mout ot grant talent de dire  
 Ce dont ele ot au cuer grant ire,  
 Et la demeure mout li couste.  
 Por ce, le jour de Pentecouste, 696  
 Quant les tables furent ostees,  
 En a la duchoise menees  
 Les dames en sa chambre o soi  
 Por eles parer en requoi, 700  
 Por venir cointes aus caroles.  
 Lors ne pot garder ses paroles

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 99

La duchoise qui vit son leu,  
Ainz dist ausi comme par geu : 704  
" Chastelaine, soiez bien cointe,  
Quar bel et preu avez acointe."  
Et cele respont simplement :  
" Je ne sai quel acointement 708  
Vous pensez, ma dame, por voir,  
Que talent n'ai d'ami avoir  
Qui ne soit del tout a l'onor  
Et de moi et de mon seignor. 712  
— Je l'otroi bien," dit la duchesse,  
" Mais vous estes bone mestresse,  
Qui avez appris le mestier  
Du petit chienet afetier." 716

Les dames ont oï le conte,  
Mes ne sevent a qoi ce monte ;  
O la duchoise s'en revont  
Aus caroles qui fetes sont. 720

Et la chastelaine remaint :  
 Li cuers li trouble d'ire et taint  
 Et li mue trestoz el ventre.  
 Dedenz une garderobe entre 724  
 Ou une pucelete estoit  
 Qui aus piez du lit se gisoit,  
 Mes ele ne la pot veoir.  
 Dedenz le lit se lest cheoir 728  
 La chastelaine mout dolente ;  
 Iluec se plaint et se gaimente,  
 Et dist : " Ha ! sire Dieus, merci,  
 Que puet estre que j'ai oï 732  
 Que ma dame m'a fet regret  
 Que j'ai afetie mon chienet ?  
 Ce ne set ele par nului,  
 Ce sai je bien, fors par celui 736  
 Que j'amoie et trahie m'a ;  
 Ne ce ne li deïst il ja,  
 S'a li n'eüst grant acointance,  
 Et s'il ne l'amast sanz doutance 740

Plus que moi quant il m'a trahie !  
 Mais or voi qu'il ne m'aime mie,  
 Quant il me faut de couvenant.  
 Douz Dieus ! et je l'amoie tant 744  
 Comme riens petüst autre amer,  
 Qu'aillors ne pooie pensser  
 Nis une eure ne jor ne nuit !  
 Quar c'ert ma joie et mon deduit, 748  
 C'ert mes delis, c'ert mes depors,  
 C'ert mes solaz, c'ert mes confors.  
 Comment a lui me contenoie  
 De pensser, quant je nel veoie ! 752  
 Ha ! amis, dont est ce venu ?  
 Que poez estre devenu,  
 Quant vers moi avez esté faus ?  
 Je cuidoie que plus loiaus 756  
 Me fussiez, se Dieus me conseut,  
 Que ne fust Tristans a Yseut ;  
 Plus vous amoie la moitié,  
 Se Dieus ait ja de moi pitié, 760

102 LA CHASTELAIN DE VERGI

Que ne fesoie moi meïsmes ;  
 Onques avant, ne puis ne primes  
 En pensser n'en dit ne en fet  
 Ne fis ne poi ne grant mesfet      764  
 Par qoi me detüssiez haïr  
 Ne si vilainement trahir  
 Comme a noz amors depecier  
 Por autre amer et moi lessier,      768  
 Et descouvrir nostre conseil.  
 He ! lasse, amis, mout me merveil,  
 Que li miens cuers, si m'aït Dieus,  
 Ne fu onques vers vous itieus.      772  
 Car, se tout le mont et neïs  
 Tout son ciel et son paradis  
 Me donast Dieus, pas nes preïsse  
 Par couvenant que vous perdisse ;      776  
 Quar vous estiiez ma richece  
 Et ma santez et ma leece,  
 Ne riens grever ne me petüst  
 Tant comme mes las cuers seüst      780

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 103

Que li vostres de riens m'amast.

Ha ! fine amor ! et qui penssast

Que cist feïst vers moi desroi,

Qui disoit, quant il ert o moi 784

Et je fesoie mon pooir

De fere trestout son voloir,

Qu'il ert toz miens, et a sa dame

Me tenoit et de cors et d'ame, 788

Et le disoit si doucement

Que le creoie vraiment,

Ne je ne penssaisse a nul fuer

Qu'il peüst trover en son cuer 792

Envers moi corouz ne haïne

Por duchoise ne por roïne ;

Qu'a lui amer estoit si buen

Qu'a mon cuer prenoie le suen ; 796

De lui me penssoie autressi

Qu'il se tenoit a mon ami

Toute sa vie et son eage,

Quar bien connois a mon corage, 800

S'avant morust, que tant l'amaïsse  
 Que petit apres lui duraisse.  
 Estre morte o lui me fust mieus  
 Que vivre si que de mes ieus 804  
 Ne le veïsse nule foiz.  
 Ha ! fine amor, est ce donc droiz  
 Que cil a ainsi descouvert  
 Nostre conseil, dont il me pert ? 808  
 Qu'a m'amor otroier li dis  
 Et bien en couvenant li mis  
 Qu' a icele eure me perdroit  
 Que nostre amor descouvreroit. 812  
 Et quant j'ai avant perdu lui,  
 Ne puis vivre apres tel anui.  
 Que sanz lui por cui je me dueil  
 Ne puis vivre ne je ne vueil ; 816  
 De ma vie ne me plest point,  
 Ainz pri Dieu que la mort me doinst,  
 Et que, tout ausi vraiment  
 Comme j'ai ame leaument 820

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 105

Celui qui ce m'a porchacié,  
Ait de l'ame de moi pitié,  
Et a celui qui a son tort  
M'a trahie et livrée a mort 824  
Doinst honor. Et je li pardon ;  
Ne ma mort n'est se douce non,  
Ce m'est avis, quant de lui vient ;  
Et quant de s'amor me sovient, 828  
Por lui morir ne m'est pas paine."

A tant se tut la chastelaine  
Fors qu'ele dist en souspirant :  
" Douz amis, a Dieu vous commant !" 832  
A cest mot de ses braz s'estraint,  
Li cuers li faut, li vis li taint :  
Angoisseusement s'est pasmee,  
Et gist pale et descoloree 836  
En mi le lit, morte, sanz vie.  
Mes ses amis ne le set mie,



Qui se deduisoit en la sale  
 A la carole et dansse et bale ; 840  
 Mes ne li plect riens qu'il i voie,  
 Quant cele a cui son cuer s'otroie  
 N'i voit point, dont mout se merveille.  
 Si a dit au duc en l'oreille : 844  
 "Sire, qu'est ce que vostre niece  
 Est demoree si grant piece,  
 Que n'est aus caroles venue ?  
 Ne sai se l'avez mise en mue." 848  
 Et li dus la carole esgarde,  
 Qui de ce ne s'estoit pris garde :  
 Celui a soi par la main trait,  
 Et droit en la chambre s'en vait ; 852  
 Et quant illueques ne la trueve,  
 Au chevalier commande et rueve  
 Qu'en la garderobe la quiere,  
 Quar il le veut en tel maniere, 856  
 Por leenz entr'aus solacier  
 Com d'acoler et de besier.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 107

Et cil qui li en sot hanz grez  
Est en la garderobe entrez 860

Ou s'amie gisoit enverse  
El lit, descolouree et perse.  
Cil maintenant l'acole et baise,  
Que bien en ot et lieu et aise ; 864

Mes la bouche a trovee froide  
Et partout bien pale et bien roide,  
Et au samblant que li cors moustre  
Voit bien qu'ele est morte tout outre. 868

Tantost toz esbahiz s'escrie :  
" Qu'est ce, las ? est morte m'amie ? "

Et la pucele sailli sus  
Qui aus piez du lit gisoit jus, 872

Et dist : " Sire, ce croi je bien  
Qu'ele soit morte, qu'autre rien  
Ne demanda puis que vint ci,  
Por le corouz de son ami 876

Dont ma dame l'ataïna  
Et d'un chienet la ramposna,

Dont li corouz li vint morteus."

Et quant cil entent les mos teus 880

Que ce qu'il dist au duc l'a morte,

Sanz mesure se desconforte :

"Ha las !" dist il, "ma douce amor,

La plus cortoise et la meilleur 884

C'onques fust et la plus loial,

Comme trichierres desloial

Vous ai morte ! Si fust droiture

Que sor moi tornast l'aventure, 888

Si que vous n'en eüssiez mal ;

Mes le cuer aviez si loial

Que sor vous l'avez avant prise.

Mes je ferai de moi justise 892

Por la trahison que j'ai fete !"

Une espee du fuerre a trete

Qui ert pendue a .I. espuer,

Et s'en feri par mi le cuer : 896

Cheoir se lest sor l'autre cors ;

Cil a tant sainie qu'il est mors.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI 109

Et la pucele est hors saillie,  
Quant ele vit les cors sanz vie : 900  
Hidor ot de ce qu'ele vit.  
Au duc qu'ele encontra a dit  
Ce qu'ele a oï et veü  
Si qu'ele n'i a riens teti, 904  
Comment l'afere ert commencie,  
Neïs du chienet afetie  
Dont la Duchoise avoit parle.  
Ez vous le duc adonc derve : 908  
Tout maintenant en la chambre entre,  
Au chevalier trest fors du ventre  
L'espee dont s'estoit ocis.  
Tantost s'est a la voie mis 912  
Grant oirre droit a la carole,  
Sanz plus tenir longue parole ;  
Maintenant vint a la duchesse :  
Si li a rendu sa promesse 916  
Quar el chief li a embatue  
L'espee qu'il aportoit nue,

110 LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Sanz parler, tant estoit iriez.  
 La duchoise chiet a ses piez, 920  
 Voiant toz ceus de la contree,  
 Dont fu la feste mout troublee  
 Des chevaliers qui la estoient,  
 Qui grant joie menee avoient. 924  
 Et li dus trestout ausi tost,  
 Oiant toz, qui oïr le vost,  
 Conta l'aferre en mi la cort.  
 Lors n'i a celui qui n'en plort, 928  
 Et nommeement quant il voient  
 Les .II. amanz qui mort estoient,  
 Et la duchoise d'autre part :  
 A duel et a corouz depart 932  
 La cort et a meschief vilain.  
 Li dus enterrer l'endemain  
 Fist les amanz en .I. sarqueu,  
 Et la duchoise en autre leu. 936  
 Mes de l'aventure ot tele ire  
 C'onques puis ne l'oï on rire.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI    III

Errant se croisa d'outre mer,  
Ou il ala sanz retorner,                    940  
Si devint ilueques Templiers.  
Ha! Dieus ! trestous cilz encombriers  
Et cis meschies por ce avint  
Qu'au chevalier tant mesavint                    944  
Qu'il dist ce que celer devoit  
Et que desfendu li avoit  
S'amie qu'il ne le deïst  
Tant com s'amor avoir vousist.                    948  
Et par cest example doit l'en  
S'amor celer par si grant sen  
C'on ait toz jors en remembrance  
Que li descouvrirs riens n'avance.                    952  
Et li celers en toz poins vaut.  
Qui si le fait, ne crient assaut  
Des faus felons enquerreors,  
Qui enquierent autrui amors.                    956

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